

1           1. A system for use with a product, comprising a  
2 user interface which is associated with the product and  
3 enables local bi-directional communication, between a user of  
4 the product and the product, of local information concerning  
5 use of the product,  
6           product information which is related to the local  
7 information and is communicated between the product and a  
8 remote party other than the user, and  
9           means for for taking action with respect to the  
10 product or the user interface based on the product  
11 information.

1           2. The system of claim 1 further comprising  
2           an authoring system for use by the remote party for  
3 managing the content of the local information and of the  
4 product information.

1           3. The system of claim 1 further comprising  
2           an analyzer of product information received at the  
3 remote party, and  
4           means for controlling the taking of action with  
5 respect to the product or the user interface in response to  
6 the analyzer.

1           4. The system of claim 1 wherein the product  
2 information includes new interface elements and is  
3 communicated from the remote party to the product.

1           5. The system of claim 1 wherein the user interface  
2 comprises a product module which may be disabled and enabled  
3 selectively.

1           6. The system of claim 5 wherein the module may be  
2 enabled in resposnes to a trigger event.

1           7. The system of claim 6 wherein the trigger event  
2 is initiated locally at the product.

1           8. The system of claim 6 wherein the trigger event  
2 is initiated by the remote party.

1           9. The system of claim 1 wherein the local  
2 information concerning use of the product is generated during  
3 use of the product.

1           10. The system of claim 1 wherein the user interface  
2 communicates queries to the user during use of the product.

1           11. The system of claim 10 wherein the queries are  
2 determined by the nature of the use of the product.

1           12. The system of claim 1 wherein responses to the  
2 queries are stored in the product.

1           13. The system of claim 5 wherein the module  
2 comprises hardware and software.

1           14. The system of claim 1 wherein the user interface  
2 comprises one or more of a display screen, a keyboard, a  
3 keyboard, a microphone, and a speaker.

1           15. The system of claim 1 wherein the means for  
2 taking action changes the interactions permitted with the  
3 user.

1           16. The system of claim 1 wherein the communication  
2 between the product and the remote party passes via one or  
3 more of broadcast transmission, wire, or a removable memory  
4 device.

1           17. The system of claim 3 wherein the analyzer  
2 analyzes product information for received at the remote party  
3 from multiple users with respect to multiple products.

1           18. The system of claim 1 wherein the user interface  
2 includes a natural language component.

1           19. The system of claim 18 wherein the user  
2 interface includes multiple natural languages, selectable by  
3 the user.

1           20. The system of claim 1 wherein the occurrences of  
2 communication between the user and the product are controlled  
3 by the user.

1           21. The system of claim 20 wherein the user is  
2 enabled to terminate a communication with the product at  
3 will.

1           22. The system of claim 1 wherein the user interface  
2 includes a user control for selectively enabling or disabling  
3 the user interface.

1           23. A method for aiding design of a product  
2 comprising  
3           creating a first version of the product,  
4           including with the first version a user feedback  
5 element which accumulates information on use of the product  
6 by a user,  
7           recovering the information from the user feedback  
8 element,  
9           analyzing the information, and  
10          redesigning the product in accordance with the  
11 results of the analyzing step.

1           24. The method of claim 23 wherein the information  
2 includes information provided by the user with respect to  
3 problems in use of the product.

1           25. The method of claim 23 wherein the information  
2 includes information provided by the user with respect to  
3 solutions to problems in use of the product.

1           26. The method of claim 23 wherein the information  
2 includes information provided by the user with respect to  
3 usability of the product.

1           27. The method of claim 23 wherein the information  
2 includes demographic marketing information about the user of  
3 the product.

1           28. The method of claim 23 wherein the information  
2 includes information about the user's use patterns for the  
3 product.

1           29. The method of claim 23 wherein the information  
2 includes information about business processes using the  
3 product.

1           30. The method of claim 23 wherein the information  
2 includes analysis of tasks performed by the user with the  
3 product.

1           31. The method of claim 23 wherein the information  
2 includes analysis of the performance of the user with the  
3 product.

1           32. The method of claim 23 wherein the information  
2 includes transactions performed by the user with the product.

1           33. The method of claim 23 wherein the information  
2 includes user-suggested expansion of business relationships.

1           34. The method of claim 23 wherein the information  
2 includes user-suggested improvements of processes.

1           35. The method of claim 23 further comprising  
2           enabling the user to set a priority for response to  
3 information entered by the user via the user interface.

1           36. The method of claim 23 wherein the information  
2 recovered from the user feedback element comprises  
3 information developed in the course of interactive learning  
4 by the user.

1           37. The method of claim 23 wherein the step of  
2 analyzing includes running user tests of information  
3 recovered from the user feedback element.

1           38. The method of claim 37 further comprising, prior  
2 to redesigning the product,  
3           delivering to the user via the feedback element,  
4 proposed redesigns of the product, and  
5           recovering information about the proposed redesigns  
6 via the feedback element.

1           39. The method of claim 23 further comprising  
2           electronically sharing the information from the user  
3 feedback element with a third party.

1           40. The method of claim 23 further comprising  
2           providing a mechanism for compensating a user for  
3 information accumulated in the feedback element.

1           41. The method of claim 23 further comprising  
2           providing a mechanism for buying and selling results  
3 of the analyzing step.

1           42. The method of claim 23 further comprising giving  
2 access to the feedback element to a third party.

1           43. A method for providing information to a user of  
2 a product, comprising  
3           including with the product a user interface which  
4 enables local communication of information to the user  
5 concerning use of the product, and  
6           delivering product information from a remote location  
7 to the user interface,  
8           delivering local information, based on the product  
9 information, to the user via the user interface.

1           44. The method of claim 43 wherein the local  
2 information is marketing information.

1           45. The method of claim 43 wherein the local  
2 information is sales information.

1           46. The method of claim 43 wherein the local  
2 information is customer service information, and further  
3 comprising conveying user requests for customer service  
4 information via the user interface and by remote  
5 communication to a service provider.

1           47. The method of claim 43 wherein the local  
2 information is training information.